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PRINCIPAL SECRETARY & COMMISSIONER OF MUSEUMS

IWA ENDOWMENT LECTURE

"The Monuments of King Serfoji - II
European Sculpture & Architecture
At the Thanjavur Maratha Court"

by
Dr. Indira Viswanathan Peterson
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S.S. JAWAHAR, I.A.S.,
Principal Secretary / Commissioner of Museums
Government Museum,
Egmore, Chennai-600 008

Off: 044 - 2819 3778
Fax: 044 - 2819 3035
E.mail:govtmuse@tn.gov.in

FOREWORD

International Women's Association constituted an Endowment Lecture in 1996 in the Government Museum, Chennai and since then several eminent scholars have delivered lectures in this August Theatre. This bulletin is being brought out on the occasion of "International Women's Association Endowment Lecture's" series. This lecture which is the 13th series recalls our mind about King Serfoji II of Tanjore and his innovations in European and Indian Cultural forms in several fields including music, dance, education, medicine and printing.

This lecture will illuminate aspects of Serfoji's pioneering and innovative engagement with European sculpture and with the European culture of public monuments at a very early period of their deployment in India by the English East India Company. This lecture deals with the remarkable history of Serfoji's engagement with European architecture. Dr. Indira Visvanathan Peterson an eminent historian of high repute and great scholarship in interlia deals with the European culture of public monuments. We are really grateful to Prof. Dr. Indira Visvanathan Peterson for her gracious presence and deliverance. We also take this opportunity to thank her for this as also for providing the printerd scripts prepared by her well in advance to enable us release the bulletin along with her lecture on the occasion of International Women's Association Lecture which has created this Endowment.

I am sure this bulletin will be a valuable addition to the Library of historians, students and scholars a like.

(S.S. Jawahar)
18\1\2013

The Monuments of King Serfoji II: European Sculpture & Architecture at the Thanjavur Maratha Court

Dr. Indira Viswanathan Peterson

David B. Truman Professor of Asian Studies

Mount Holyoke College, USA

Text of International Women's Association Lecture

11 am, Friday, January 11, 2013

Government Museum, Madras, Chennai

Introduction: Serfoji II of Tanjore and European sculpture and architecture

Serfoji II of Tanjore (Thanjavur)(r. 1798 - 1832) is well known for his innovations in European and Indian cultural forms in several fields, including music, dance, education, medicine and printing.[1] This lecture will illuminate aspects of Serfoji's pioneering and innovative engagement with European sculpture and with the European culture of public monuments at a very early period of their deployment in India by the English East India Company itself.

Already in the early 1800s Serfoji commissioned for installation in Tanjore a major public monument in honor of his mentor Revd. Christian Friedrich Sch (1726-1798) a German missionary who worked for the English Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, and a portrait sculpture of himself from John Flaxman (1755 -1826), a famed neo-classical sculptor in London. In the 18th century, in the early period of European political involvement in the affairs

of Indian princely states, Indian rulers had shown interest in European arts, especially painting and architecture. The Nawabs of Lucknow, for example, employed European engineers to build in the Indian style, but with European touches, while Claude Martin and other Europeans combined European and Indian features in the lavish buildings they constructed in Lucknow.[2] In Madras itself, Mohammad Ali Walajah, the Nawab or Arcot, employed European engineers in the design and construction of Chepauk Palace and other grand buildings.[3] Not until a much later period, however, did Indians express interest in European sculpture. Serfoji's Flaxman sculptures were pioneering in many respects. One of the earliest monuments erected for a missionary in India, the Schwartz monument was also the first sculptural memorial commissioned for a European by an Indian. The European portrait sculpture was a first for an Indian ruler as well. Both of Serfoji's Flaxman commissions reveal Serfoji as an autonomous agent shaping and deploying the symbolic language of the relatively new culture of European public monuments in early colonial South India.

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Indian princely states became the sites of extravagant and lavish palaces, monuments and other architectural experiments commissioned from European and European-trained Indian engineers and builders, for example, the commissions of the Maharaja of Jaipur for S. Swinton Jacob, or the Mysore Maharaja's for Henry Irwin.[4] In this later period, Madras was also the premier site for the development of the so-called "Indo-Saracenic" style by Robert Chisholm and other British architects, inspired by the Nawab of Arcot's buildings.[5] Serfoji did not engage in such elaborate building projects. In his most ambitious construction, the palatial Muktambal Chattram alsmhouse at Orathanadu near Tanjore, begun in 1801-02 and elaborated over the next 15 years, the king principally employed Indian idioms of palace and temple architecture.[6] But in Manora, a hybrid seaside monument, a

combination of tower and fort, that he built circa 1815 to commemorate a major European Allied victory over Napoleon in 1814, Serfoji shaped heterogeneous Indic and European prototypes and symbols to his own purposes. Among the the first Indians to study European architecture, the king of Tanjore was also the first Indian ruler to to present to English visitors and officials with architectural line drawings in the European manner, produced by the Indian draughtsmen he employed for the purpose. Drawing on original research conducted at the Sarasvati Mahal Library and other archives at Thanjavur, the Tamil Nadu State Archives, the British Library, the Royal Asiatic Society and The Royal Institute of British Architects, in the remainder of this lecture, through a detailed examination of the Flaxman sculptures, Serfoji's architectural drawings and the Manora monument, I will illuminate Serfoji's innovations and contributions in the context European practice in sculpture and architecture in England and India. In particular, through a comparison of Serfoji's Flaxman commissions with British sculpture at St. Mary's Church, Madras and elsewhere, it is shown that Serfoji shaped the symbolism and visual language of European sculpture and monuments to assert his own voice and vision as ruler of Thanjavur, even under the condition of his subordination by the East India Company. The architectural drawings and the Manora monument send complex messages as well. Before I proceed, I wish to thank Dr. S. Suresh for the invaluable assistance he rendered me by checking some references in the Tanjore District Records at the Tamil Nadu Archives at a time when those references were not accessible to me, and for photographing on my behalf the Manora monument, as well as the Schwartz monument at St. Mary's Church, Chennai.

I. Serfoji's monument to the missionary Christian Friedrich Schwartz(1726- 1798) Christ Church, Thanjavur, 1806 -1812

Embroiled in the politics of the Carnatic, and especially in the contest for the revenues of Tanjore between Mohammad Ali, Nawab of the Carnatic, and the English East India, by the 1780's the Maratha kingdom of Tanjore had become a pawn in the hands of the East India Company. British troops were garrisoned in Tanjore city from 1773. On his deathbed, King Tulajaji II adopted the 10-year-old Serfoji, named him his heir and entrusted him to the care of Schwartz, a German Pietist missionary educator who worked in the Tanjore region for the English Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.[7] The Company settled the succession in favor of a rival claimant, Amar Singh (who had first been appointed as regent) but arranged for Serfoji to be given a European education in English by C.W. Gericke, a German missionary in Madras. In 1798 the Company deposed Amar Singh, and instated Serfoji on the Tanjore throne. The very next year the king was forced to transfer power to the Company through a subsidiary alliance treaty, in return for a pension and a share in the revenue, with his authority reduced to the fort and city of Tanjore.

Schwartz was the single most important figure in the young Serfoji's life. Championing his ward through all of his tavails, Schwartz became a surrogate father, teacher and mentor for him. It was through Schwrtz's intervention with the EICo that Serfoji's adoption was declared legitimate and that the prince was enabled to claim the succession. In Tanjore in person and in Madras through affectionate letters, Schwartz oversaw Serfoji's edcucation in European knowledge systems, but also Christian-European moral values. In these initiatives Schwartz was following the German Pietist ideal of a complete education of the young person as the first and necessary step towards becoming a good human being and true and believing Christian. Despite

the hopes of Schwartz and other evangelicals, Serfoji did not convert to Christiatnity, remaining a staunch Hindu all his life. On the other hand, there was no person in the world he admired more than his missionary mentor. Above all, it was on account of Schwartz's direct influence that Serfoji became an eminent Indian leader of charitable and modernizing educational projects in early colonial India, establishing, among other things, the first free elementary public schools run by an Indian state.[8] Serfoji expressed his gratitude to and admiration for Schwartz in a myriad ways throughout his career, but the memorial he commissioned from Flaxman, and a poetic epitaph he wrote for the missionary's gravestone, are the most vivid and eloquent testimonies to the king's feelings for his missionary mentor.

The saga of the Serfoji's memorial monument to Schwartz is a remarkable one. As early as 1800, learning of the desire of missionaries and evangelicals in India to erect a memorial for the missionary, Serfoji offered to pay for such a monument. In 1801, he went a step further, writing to the SPCK in London and requesting their help in himself commissioning 'a monument of marble' to 'manifest the great esteem I have for the character of that great and good Man, and the Gratitude I own him, my Father, my Friend, the Protector, and Guardian of my Youth..'.[9] Benjamin Torin, then British Resident in Tanjore, helped Serfoji to contract the monument with Flaxman in 1802, at a cost of 1,000 pounds sterling, half of which was to be paid in advance. Serfoji added to the commission a life-size marble portrait statue of himself. Although both sculptures were completed by 1805, their shipment was delayed by the Napoleonic wars. Meanwhile, the East India Company had decided to demonstrate its own gratitude to Schwartz, who had travelled to the courts of the Mysore rulers Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan on behalf of the British, and the Company commissioned a monument for Schwartz at St.Mary's Church, Madras. When the monuments ordered by Serfoji (an approving East India Company waived

Serfoji's shipping fees and customs) arrived in Madras in early 1807, their packing cases (and the order of 650 books, mostly on medicine, that Serfoji had ordered from London) were damaged by salt water. Luckily, the sculptures were unharmed, but the Schwartz monument was too large for the pillar near the pulpit at Christ Church, Schwartz's old church in the little fort, the space Serfoji had originally intended for it, and it took the raja another five years to get a mount built for the monument. The king hired a British engineer, a Mr. Bliss, to mount the monument, and it was finally installed at the western end of the Fort church in 1812.[10]Meanwhile, in 1807, the Company had already erected its own monument to Schwartz at St.Mary's church in Fort St.George, Madras.[11]

The Schwartz monument garnered an astounding number of 'firsts' for Serfoji. The king was the first Indian to erect such a monument, becoming a leader in a nascent British colonial culture of monuments.[12] He anticipated the East India Company in proposing a monument for Schwartz. He engaged England's most celebrated sculptor of memorials for the commission, and at great cost. But The most remarkable thing about the monument, however, is the scene it depicts. The sculpture portrays Schwartz lying on his death-bed, with Gericke standing behind him, and Serfoji ministering to him. The faces of Schwartz and Serfoji form the center of attention. The raja stands by his mentor's bed, with a sorrowful expression on his face, one hand placed tenderly behind Schwartz's head, and the other grasping his hand. The missionary looks up at his ward with a loving, benevolent gaze. Two Maratha courtiers, one with a sword raised up in salutation, stand to the right, and on the right foreground four little boys huddle sorrowfully together, representing the poor and orphaned boys who were sheltered and educated by the missionary. Serfoji worked closely with Flaxman on its content and design, possibly another first for an Indian prince. While Flaxman designed the monument according to the conventions of

memorial monuments for deceased celebrities prevalent at the time in England, he had to keep in mind the intentions and wishes of his Indian client. The distinctive and autonomous character of Serfoji's monument becomes clear on comparing its imagery and symbolic meanings with those in contemporary monuments made for missionaries and others, both in England, and in Madras and elsewhere in colonial India. In order to arrive at a spefic reading of Serfoji's monument to Schwartz , however, we must set it in the larger context of the rise in early 19th century English colonial circles, including the Company government in India itself, of a culture of sculptured church monuments for missionaries and colonial personalities, a culture that was particularly strong in the Presidency center of Madras.

During much of the 18th century, when the English East India Company was rising as the dominant political power in India, Company policy forbade government sponsorship and encouragement of Christian missionary activity in India. The policy was stringently followed in Calcutta, the major center of the Company government. In South India, however, sympathetic Company officials and a pragmatic government had encouraged and employed Halle-trained German Protestant missionaries, who had settled in Traqnuebar near Tanjore in the early 18th century under Danish auspices, in conducting schools for Eurasian and poor children in Madras and the provinces.[13] As we have seen, Schwartz had close ties with the Tanjore court, and both he and Serfoji's tutor Gericke worked for SPCK and in part for the English Company.Gericke was the director of the Madras Female Orphan Asylum, established by the English community in Madras in 1787 as a charity school and institution for Eurasian and European children, while Schwartz aided the British in a myriad ways. By the time of the death of Gericke in 1803, evangelical lobbies in England had influenced both local English sentiment and metropolitan policies regarding Christian proselytization among the "heathen" in India. Although overt

missionary activity was not officially sanctioned until the signing of the revised charter of the East India Company in 1813, already in the first decade of the 19th century there was a strong movement for the recognition of the evangelizing as well as benevolent and educational work of missionaries in India. Closely related to this change in policy was the upsurge of nationalism, based on British victories against Napoleon, especially Nelson's victories in the Battle of the Nile (1798) and at Trafalgar (1805), but there were other changes, founded in Britain's newly strengthened role as imperial power in India. Especially following the consolidation of English supermacy in the Carnatic and South India in 1799, following the fall of Tipu Sultan and the Mysore Kingdom, the Company state presented itself as the representative of a morally superior English civilization, bringing a closely intertwined combination of just and benevloent rule and better morals to benighted and suffering Indians. As art historians and historians of religion have shown in recent work, British colonial memorial monuments in churches, especially in Madras, articulated this new configuration of the ideology of benevolent colonial rule and evangelical morality, most vividly, powerfully and clearly.[14]

Around 1800 there was a sudden rise, and then a steady proliferation of memorial monuments to Britons and other Europeans who worked for British interests, first at St.Mary's Church (est. 1658) , the principal place of worship associated with the EICo government in Madras, and later at Madras Cathedral, built immediately following the Charter renewal of 1813 and the establishment of an Anglican Bishopric for India in Calcutta. This rise of memorial monuments testifies to the British colonial government's deployment of the visual and symbolic language of sculptural monuments as an instruments, not only of commemoration of ideal figures for the British population in the colonies, but also of what one scholar has called "Persuasion and Propaganda" directed at the native populations it governed. M.A. Steggles notes that 37 out of

the 88 public monuments erected between 1791 and 1876 in the three Presidency cities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, most of which were raised under government auspices or by public subscription (among the British population), are located in Madras, and the majority of these are distributed between St. Mary's and the Madras Cathedral, also known as St.George's. Within and beyond this time period, 19 memorial monuments, mainly for deceased persons, were erected at St. Mary's, and 25 at the Madras Cathedral. The monuments were executed by Britain's pre-emeinnent sculptors-- John Flaxman, John Bacon, Jr., F.L. Chantrey , Richard Westmacott and others, who had also executed similar monuments at London's prestigious West Minister Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. Flaxman held the first chair for sculpture at the Royal Academy, established in 1810.

Let us examine the subject matter and imagery of some of these monuments. As might be expected, the earliest monuments at St. Mary's celebrated the English heroes of the Mysore wars against Tipu Sultan, as in Charles Peart's memorial to Colonel Moorhouse (d. 1798), the scene of whose battlefield death, painted by Robert Home, was widely circulated. Among the earliest and most important 'hero' monument is that made for General Cornwallis by Thomas Banks in 1798. The monument was originally placed outside, in Fort st. George, and is now located in the Fort Museum. Although the General himself is shown standing in a majestic posture, the most important feature of the monument is the scene carved in the pedestal, of Cornwallis holding out his arms in benevolent invitation to receive Abdul Khaliq and Moiz-ud-din, the two young sons of Tipu Sultan who were taken hostage by the British in 1792, at the end of the 3rd Mysore War, and placed under house arrest in Madras till 1794, thus overlapping with the young Serfoji's own stay in Madras. In much the same wasy as in earlier paintings of the scene by Arthur Devis, Robert Home (1793) and others, in the Banks monument Cornwallis is portrayed as the very soul

of paternal benevolence, while the two boys are turning trustingly to the English 'father', and eagerly stretching their arms toward him. Here is the classic statement of the British government as representing just, benevolent and paternal rule over India's native populations.

Other monuments, located inside St.Mary's, present similar scenes of paternalism and benevolence, but their subjects are not war heroes, but missionaries and administrators, who are celebrated as men who sacrificed their own interests, comfort and lives to serve Indians, especially the poor. In his 1824 monument to the merchant Thomas Parry at St. George's, in an allegorical figure of a mourning Indian man, Edward Baily comments visually on the attachment of a grieving Indian population to the departed merchant. In the typical monuments to missionaries (e.g, Bishop Reginald Heber by Chantrey, 1826, St.George's, or Revd.C.W. Gericke by Bacon, Jr. (1803, St.Mary's), the missionary is shown blessing or preaching to Indians who are kneeling or listening attentively. In the Gericke monument, as in Bacon's monument to Schwartz at St. Mary's, some of the attendant figures are children. It is importatnt to note that in later monuments, such as that to Heber, grown-up Indians are shown as figures of smaller stature, as though they were children, in comparison with the towering missionary figure, suggesting, no doubt, the relative moral stature of the two. As with the Cornwallis statue, the focus is on the the benevolence of the missionary to his native charges.

The EIC-Bacon monument to Schwartz in Madras depicts the missionary, as does the Serfoji-Flaxman monument Tanjore, as lying in his deathbed. Here, too, Schwartz is surrounded by loving and grieving children, the orphans and other boys he educated. But in this monument the missionary's outstretched arm and otherworldly gaze are turned toward an angel with a cross, representing Schwartz's piety, his unswerving and ultimate focus on the eternal life in Christ. This imagery contrasts with the touching, intimate and highly peronalized scene in Serfoji's

monument, in which the missionary is lying inert, while Serfoji is fondly and benevolently placing his hand on his mentor's head. Serfoji's monument portrays, alongside European missionaries and orphan children, the king himself and his ministers in individualized portraits, not as generic "Indian" figures, and with himself as the active figure at the center of the composition, in contrast to the generic Indian brahmans and peasants of British monuments to colonial British figures. It is clear that Serfoji wanted to highlight his own benevolent and protective affection toward the missionary, who had shown love and affection for him, feelings echoed in in the last line of the English inscription he commissioned for the monument. The long inscription for the Schwartz monument at St.Marys, Madras, gives prominence both to Schwartz's reputation as a virtuous and benevolent man and his work as envoy to Hyder Ali during the Carnatic war. The much shorter Tanjore inscription (also composed by an Englishman, and not by Serfoji himself), offers a similar portrait of Schwartz, a saintly benefactor of Indians, and as a political intermediary for the Bitish. However, the last lines of this inscription give resounding testimony to the personal relationship between the prince and the missionary: 'And the very marble that here records his virtues was raised by /the liberal affection and esteem of the / Raja of Tanjore/ Maharaja Sirfojee'.

Yet other layers of meaning are suggested in Serfoji's monument. First, there is no doubt that Flaxman and the king agreed on the focus on orphans and education implied in the inclusion of the grieving little boys in the monument. At one level, such a focus graphically portrays the life-work, virtue and benevolence of the deceased, in the conventions and sentimental idiom of British (and especially colonial) memorials. But in some ways the orphan children in the sculpture are homologues of the king himself, as the fatherless boy who was rescued by the missionary, who became his father, a personage more sympathetic than the paternalist colonial

state, which was represented in the many paintings and memorials that depicted the sons of Tipu Sultan being turned over to Cornwallis.[15] Let Serfoji speak for himself, in the English poem with which the *raja* memorialized his guru and surrogate father. Bishop Reginald Heber, himself a poet, saw the king's epitaph for Schwartz on his visit to Tanjore in 1826, and hailed it as the only English poem he knew of that was authored by an Indian prince, and a very fine poem at that. The poem, inscribed on the granite slab covering Swartz's grave in front of the altar in St Peter's Church (formerly the Mission Garden Chapel) reads:

'Firm wast thou, humble and wise,
Honest, pure, free from disguise,
Father of orphans, the widow's support,
Comfort in sorrow of every sort.
To the benighted dispenser of light,
doing, and pointing to that which is right.
Blessing to princes, to people, to me;
May I, my father, be worthy of thee/
Wishes and prayeth thy SARABOJEE. '

The poem suggests not only the missionary's virtues, but his role as an exemplar for Serfoji, and the king's own role as a benevolent ruler. Serfoji prided himself in his own aspirations and achievement as a royal protector and savior of the poor and orphans in his kingdom, activities that resonated with his mentor's teachings and example, and ones that he, Serfoji had undertaken innovatively, autonomously and in indigenous idioms. Within a few years of his accession to the throne in 1798, and certainly by the time of the establishment of the monument, not only did Serfoji support missionary education in Tanjore and Madras, but had himself become a pioneer in state-run elementary free education (this, ahead of the Company state in Madras), especially for orphans and the poor in Tanjore. In the king's charity schools,

education was imparted in five languages, and set apart from Christain contexts. But Serfoji's crowning achievement was the establishment of multilingual charity schools, aimed especially at orphans, in Muktambal Chattram in Orathanadu, a magnificent almshouse complex he established in 1801, on the model of eariler chattram almshouses endowed by his Tanjore Maratha predecessors.[16]

One of Serfoji's most ambitious projects, initiated just four years after his accession to the throne, was the establishment of a new *chattram* almshouse in the name of his concubine Muktambal. This almshouse featured greatly enhanced educational amenities. When he built the Muktambal Chattram in 1801-2, Serfoji added to this list of amenities free elementary and secondary schools, open to boys of all castes, and offering instruction in five languages. In nearby Kannandangudi, the king supported a school run by missionaries for Christian orphans; he also sponsored a school for the disabled in or near the fort.[17] Serfoji's *chattram* schools were aimed in particular at orphans and the poor, who were given room, board and medical care. "All the orphans of strangers who may come to the *chattram*," the raja wrote, were "placed in the charge of a schoolmaster and ...instructed in the sciences to which they may express a preference." In 1822 at the Muktambal Chattram School fifteen teachers taught a total of 464 students, in two classes, in morning and evening sessions. Seventy-four boys were taught in English, thirty-two in Marathi, thirty-five in Persian, sixty in Telugu, and 175 in Tamil.

The Muktambal Chattram and its schools were Serfoji's favorite public project, and in achieving public education outside the fort-city of Tanjore, Serfoji established himself, not only as an apt pupil of Schwartz, but as a force in education in his own right. The *chattram* almshouse emphasized the breadth of constituencies the Maratha king protected, ranging from brahmans to pariahs and Europeans, and orphans and strangers in territory well beyond the limits of the

Tanjore kingdom. With the Kannandangudi charity school, missionaries and native Christians were enfolded into a complex of Maratha royal charities. The *chattram* projected the Maratha court's self-image as a utopian paternalist state, whose protection extended to all humankind. In this way Tanjore's prestige was enhanced among peer princely states and the colonial regime. The choice of the royal almshouse as the much-publicized venue for free and orphan public schools was a stroke of genius on Serfoji's part. It made for a unique convergence of the English, missionary, and European "charity school" with the concept of state-sponsored public education. Along the way it demonstrated the superiority of the Tanjore court's leadership and capabilities. At the beginning of the 19th century Serfoji's state-run *chattram* schools afforded unprecedented access to a free education to needy boys of all castes, and to orphans as well.

Clearly, although Serfoji's Schwartz monument employees what appear to be the standard conventions of European memorial monuments of the early 19th century, it also invites multiple readings. As the level, placement and centrality of the raja indicate, it is obviously as much as monument to the king as to Schwartz. Serfoji presents himself in this image, the only fully narrative representation he commissioned of himself, as a loving son, a benevolent and munificent king, and himself an educator of orphans, all themes that resonated with the German Pietist and 19th century British ideals of charity, embodied in the orphan schools. The Schwartz monument is a powerful statement of Serfoji's investment in these ideals, which inserted him into European narratives of benevolence as well as Indian narratives of dharmic kingship.

II Facing the Public: The Flaxman portrait statue of Serfoji at the Thanjavur Palace

In the 1780s the garrison town of Tanjore became an early center for 'Company painting', the hybrid style which Indian artists developed to cater for colonial tastes,combining the delicacy and clarity of line of Indian miniatures with a partial adoption of European

naturalism and oil and watercolor techniques.[18] Serfoji's keen interest in the visual arts – especially in painting -- stemmed from his engagement with new modes of visual representation and documentation. The king's library housed lavishly illustrated folios, including collections of the picturesque representations of Indian scenes in the works of European artists such as Thomas and William Daniell and manuals, books and portfolios on European architecture and design.[19] The king himself sketched and painted in watercolors, in the European manner. His appreciation of naturalist and realist art notwithstanding, like European officials and visitors to India, in the 'Company' style of the painters in the Tanjore *bazaar* Serfoji found a flexible instrument for a wide variety of representational projects, ranging from portraits to natural history drawings. We might also imagine that the king found this hybrid style, in which Indian artists skillfully translated European conventions into a delicate Indian miniaturist idiom, particularly congenialto his bicultural sensibility. Serfoji became the most important South Indian patron of 'Company' style artists.

Royal portraiture was a major area in which Serfoji's commissions to company artists represented a major change in style. Serfoji's forebears produced few royal portraits, compared to the Nayakas, who commissioned paintings and sculptures of themselves at work, leisure and worship, but portraits became central to Serfoji's royal self-presentation and his transactions with Europeans.[20] Apparently, before Tulajaji II the Tanjore Marathas did not practice the ritual portrait exchanges used by Mughal-Rajput-Deccani kings to articulate their relationships with allies, subordinates and overlords, including the English Company.[21] Tulaja commissioned portraits of himself and Lord Pigot by George Willison, to compete with the Nawab, who routinely gave large European oil portraits of himself to his British allies.[22] But with Serfoji, and the plentiful availability of Company artists, royal portraits proliferated in new spaces and

contexts, keeping pace with the rise of portraiture among Company employees and other Indian elites, in response to the new needs of colonial society.[23] The heightened individualization of the subject, and a naturalistic portrayal of the face and figure constitute the major representational shift in portraits at Serfoji's court. In portraits executed throughout the king's reign, Serfoji is individualized and humanized, through the adoption of European realist and naturalistic techniques, and by the replacement of the older, traditional profile view of the royal figure by the frontal stance or 3/4 face view of European portraiture. On the other hand, royal authority and grandeur are conveyed through anti-naturalistic conventions-- hieratic postures, and conventions of size, dress and ornament. The effect is of a recognizable individual as well as an iconic figure.Both the Company style painter and the king agreed on the use of the 3/4 view as a marker of modern identity, and, in the case of court portraits, as a marker of Serfoji's *difference* fromearlier rulers in the dynasty, and royal figures portrayed in other painting styles.

But the most intriguing portrait of Serfoji is the life-size white marble statue that he ordered from Flaxman at the cost of £1,200.[24] When the sculptures arrived in Tanjore in 1806, the raja had the portrait statue placed on the impressive granite slab on which the Nayaka throne once stood, in the old Nayaka Darbar hall at the palace. Serfoji's European visitors saw the 'noble statue' of the king in the Nayaka Darbar Hall, where it is still displayed. Dressed in Maratha court dress, wearing a real sword at his waist, and a removable turban on his head, Serfoji stands with his palms joined *anjali,* the Indian gesture of salutation and worship. The Rajastands with his palms joined in the *anjali* gesture of salutation and worship. How may we read thisgesture, used in earlier South Indian art for depicting devotees (including kings) worshipping deities or holy people, in devotional settings, now used by a European artist for a royal statue placed in a public 'exhibition' hall (although less accessible than the Maratha darbar,

where public audiences were given)? Viewers would have been familiar with royal images with this gesture, in the larger than life-size portrait sculptures of Nayaka and Setupati kings as devotees, in the great temples at Madurai, Rameswaram and Tirunelveli. As Crispin Branfoot has shown, the placement of these royal sculptures (often in dynastic and familial groups) on piers and pillars in the great outer halls of the temples, placed strategically on the route of the deity's processions in and out of the sanctum, mark the *anjali* gesture as one of devotion to the deity. However massive he size of the sculpture, the king stands in a posture of humility directed at the deity and not, as some scholars have suggested, towards the public, and thus expressing his persona as royal devotee.[25]

The frontality of the Flaxman sculpture is ambiguous. On the one hand, it neatly fits in the slot of indigenous sculptural conventions of royal frontality, especially as marked by the devotional posture. By placing the portrait sculpture in the courtly public space of the darbar, however, and not in the temple, Serfoji subtly added to the signification of the *anjali*, perhaps turning it into the modern, 'secular' gesture of greeting (*namaste)*, now extended to heterogeneous public audiences—courtiers, Europeans, and sometimes, his subjects. But the statue's rich ambiguity was lost on a Mr. S.I.Pratt, who viewed it on display a Flaxman's London studio in 1806, and was moved to write a poem, which he sent to the king. Pratt sees in Serfoji the epitome of pious devotion: "With supplicating eyes, and folded hands, /See, wrapt in thought sublime, the Sov'reign stands, ...His pious spirit mov'd, appears to rise, / To hail it's kindred seraphs in the skies'.[26]

III Serfoji's architectural line drawings

Accompanying Reginald Heber, Bishop of the Anglican Church of India, on his Easter visit to Tanjore and to Serfoji's court in March, 1826,Chaplain Thomas Robinson notes that the Tanjore ruler showed "considerable information on the subject of Architecture, and the comparative excellences and peculiarities of the Hindu and Mussulman styles".[27]Earlier in his reign the Raja had presented European-style scale drawings of local Hindu temples and sculpture to visitors, and to his old friend Benjamin Torin who, after retiring as Resident of Tanjore in 1803, became Serfoji's agent in London.[28]In 1798, in their *Oriental Scenery*, Thomas and William Daniell published beautiful aquatint images of the Brihadisvara temple,[29] the epitome of the European vision of India as the ultimate expression of the picturesque, of antiquity in ruins. Tanjore was a major destination for nearly every British artist who came to India in search of the picturesque, and Serfoji's own reign was marked by the visits, among others, of Elisha Trapaud, and Lord Valentia, accompanied by his artist Henry Salt (1804).[30] Along with these European artists, and Indian 'Company' artists in the Tanjore garrison and at the court, who produced beautiful images of the 'Great Pagoda', at the beginning of the 19th century, Serfoji must have trained a new gaze at the Brihadisvara and other temples. The king sent to his friend Benjamin Torin in London architectural scale drawings of temples in the European style, including scale drawings of sculptured pillars at the Avudaiyarkoyil Shiva temple, and the gateway of the Sarangapani Vishnu temple in Kumbhakonam.[31]Serfoji owned copies of the Daniells' works and other works on the picturesque, and himself practiced sketching. He also had an extensive library with instructional and illustrative books on European architectural design. In 1804, Lord Valentia writes that the king not only commented on Henry Salt's drawings (presumably, of the temple), but also gave him, at his request, a scale drawing of the pavilion with the Great Bull.[32] In the cover letter, sent to William Blackburne, the Resident, Serfoji writes[33]:

> 'I beg leave to send you the drawing of the south? of the great Bull in the little fort is 16 feet 2 inches in length and 12 feet and 6 Inch in high, the stone is black marble which was established by Carikala Cholla Rajah. / If this drawing is right agreeably to the desire of Lord Valentia, I beg you will be pleased to send to him. If not, you will be pleased to return to me with an explanation how to draw and what view should it be, I will order to draw it soon agreeably. / We read in Tanjour Pooran or History that this bull was then growing which by the order of Cholla Rajah, the architect searched and found some whater with a Tarie or a kind of lean frog in the thigh of the Bull and took it out and then the growing was stopt the sound of which is still in the thigh.'[34]

The reference, of course, is to the local tale of the toad, recorded in the*Brihadisvara Mahatmya,* the Sanskrit *sthala purana l*ocal history text of the Brihadisvara temple.

In 1794, a school for training Indians as draughtsmen for English survey operations was established in Madras at the initiative of astronomer and marine surveyor Michael Topping. These men, as well as local Indian artists were employed by Europeans to produce architectural scale drawings for private projects, but between 1801 and 1816 the most important employer of South Indian draughtsmen and artists was Colin Mackenzie, who engaged artists to paint and prepare scale drawings of Indian antiquities, including temples. Already in the late 18th century Adam Blackader had commissioned a large number of scale drawings of the Madurai Meenakshi temple and Tirumalai Nayaka's constructions and sculptures from artists who were trained in the indigenous architectural knowledge of Shilpa Shastra. Serfoji clearly had access to some of the same artists from Madurai and elsewhere, and some of the artists he employed at Tanjore and Kumbhakonam might well have also worked for Mackenzie and other Europeans. It

was not until 1834 that the first Indian-authored work on the *shilpa shastra,* with line drawings, Ram Raz's *Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus* was published (posthumously) by the Royal Asiatic Society. A native of Thanjavur, Ram Raz was employed by the British and had been trained in English, and had access to the artists and draughtsmen of Tanjore.

The most public European acknowledgment of Serfoji's status as Enlightenment scholar and enlightened ruler came with his election as the first of four honorary members of the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS) in London, immediately on its formation in 1823. Serfoji was proposed by Alexander Johnston, an evangelically minded Orientalist who had retired as Chief Justice of Ceylon and was a founder-member of the RAS. Born into a British family in Madurai, Johnston was a close friend of Colin Mackenzie and had travelled all over South India on geographical and antiquarian missions. Among the other founders was William Blackburne, former Resident of Tanjore. The three other honorary members were the Duke of Orleans, the King of Awadh, and Abbas Mirzah, prince Royal of Persia.'[35] The honor, finalized with a diploma in 1824, immediately inserted Serfoji's name in British and European intellectual circles, and it began to appear frequently in connection with his progressive projects and scholarly activities, in popular periodicals such as The *Gentleman's Magazine* and *The Literary Gazette.* After his death, Shivaji sent a set of architectural drawings to the Royal Asiatic Society in London, apparently on behalf of his father, who had intended to send them in response to Sir Alexander Johnston's request for information on the 'sculpture of the Hindus'. Johnston had reported in an announcement made some time before Serfoji's death in 1832: 'Much information upon the sculpture of the Hindus was contained in the collection of Colonel Mackenzie, and Sir Alexander is expected to receive a system of that art from the Rajah of Tanjore; (i.e., Serfoji)' [36] Included among the drawings Shivaji sent were drawings (some of which were made under Serfoji's orders), of the

Brihadisvara temple, the Great Bull of the Brihadisvara, the Nayaka and Maratha darbar halls and the Nayaka tower at the Tanjore palace, and the lovely Pivla Mahal or Saje Madi palace Serfoji built in 1825, with its Tuscan yellow paint and Italianate façade. Johnston exhibited the drawings at the British Architectural Institute's Inaugural Meeting in London (1836).[37]

IV Manora: A singular, hybrid monument to the British Victory over Napoleon in 1814

In Saluvanayakapatnam, which Serfoji renamed 'Sarabhendrarajapatnam' (King Sarabhendra's port), located between Pattukkottai and Rameswaram on the coastal pilgrimage route to Ramesvaram, there stands an eight-storeyed hexagonal tower, built of brick and stone, its interior lustrous with a pearl-white finish, and surrounded at the base by a fortress and moat.[38] This is Manora ('minaret'), yet another contribution from Serfoji to the British culture of monuments, this time, a victory monument.[39] As the inscriptions in five languages (English, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Marathi) at the structure's base declare, Serfoji built it to commemorate the British and allied victories over Napoleon Bonaparte at Leipzig or Paris (1814): 'His Highness Maharajah Sirfojee Rajah of Tanjore / The friend and ally of the British Government / Erected this Column To Commemorate the Triumphs Of the British Arms / And the Downfall of Bonaparte 1814'.[40] Erected to demonstrate Serfoji's loyalty to the British, Manora was probably inspired by the monuments to Admiral Nelson that sprang up in Britain and the colonies. Serfoji had a remarkably complete European library (at the end of his life it ran to 4,000 books) in all the Enlightement disciplines. In addition to owning textbooks and manuals on European architecture, he kept up with new monuments and buildings in England by reading widely circulated popular journals such as *Gentleman's Magazine*. The king would have known about Chambers' famous pagoda at Kew Gardens, and about the "Peace Pagoda" John Nash built for the 1814 celebration of the 'Glorious Peace' at St.James' Park, London.T here was also a major

monument commemorating Admiral Horatio Nelson and the battle of Trafalgar, erected at Calton Hill, Edinburgh in 1807 and elaborated till 1814.[41] Although this monument aims at mimicking the shape of a telescope, it bears a major resemblance to Manora. Moreover, its symbolic meaning as a victory column-cum-multi-storied tower had resonances with the other kinds of local towers that must have stirred Serfoji's imaginations. Serfoji's commemoration of the 1814 Allied victory (a year before Waterloo) was surely modeled at least in part on the two-month-long celebration of the same victory (The Glorious Peace) by the Prince Regent through constructions and events at London's public parks. Of particular relevance are the Chinese bridge and 7-storied pagoda (resembling the one that survives in today's Kew Gardens) builty by John Nash, and the commemorative enactments of Nelson's1798 and 1805 naval victories (the Nile and Trafalgar) at St. James' park. Paintings of Nash's pagoda were widely disseminated, but the pagoda and bridge were themselves destroyed in a fire before the 1814 two month-celebration was over.

But Manora's stylistic and functional genealogies cannot be explained with reference to British models for commemorative columns, pagodas and towers alone. Serfoji's whimsical, hybrid monument conflates Islamic minarets, dovecots, Chinese pagodas, and lighthouses as well.[42] Its original inspiration was surely the Periya Minara (Great Minaret), the fifth and largest minaret of the Nagore Dargah, built by Serfoji's grandfather Pratap Singh, in thanksgiving to the Muslim saint Shahul Hamid, but also to bolster the Maratha court's claims as the Dargah's main benefactors.[43]Among Manora's features are the scorings and resting spaces typically provided in pigeon- or dove-cotes that were a standard feature of royal complexes (e.g., Tipu Sultan's Darya Daulat palace were provided with such pigeon-cotes). Manora does resemble the two Maratha dovecots situated near the Maratha palace at Tiruvaiyaru. Lastly, in Manora Serfoji extended

and affirmed the older Maratha tradition of building forts in strategic location, in this case, on the coast and on the road to Ramesvaram, a pilgrimage destination whose popularity was rising in the 19th century. Serfoji built Manora at the port of Saluvanayakanpatnam, not far from the Pattukkottai fort. The tower, with its own fortifications, cannon, military guard and a lighthouse, and adjacent ship- and boat-yards, served Serfoji to establish a secular, and quasi-military presence at this port, which he renamed Sarabhendrarajapatnam. The Maratha court employed the boats and ships built or docked at Saluvanyakanpatnam at the very least for transporting goods connected with its coastal industries. Adirampatnam, Manora, and the nearby settlement of Setubavachattram, where Serfoji and several Europeans built summer-houses, were all spaces in which the king socialized with Europeans friends and officers. Both Serfoji and the Tanjore's British Residents stayed frequently at the king's house in Setubavachattram. Manora functioned as a coastal fort (on the model of Western and Tanjore Maratha forts, as in nearby Pattukkottai), and Serfoji had made Saluvanayakanpattinam a fullfledged port and shipyard.[44] These multiple functions are discernible in the scale drawing of Manora (circa 1815) done by a court artist, presented to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1824 by Captain James Michael, who had served as Office Commanding at the Tanjore Residency.[45] Manora is a monument to the sheer complexity of function and the exuberance of innovation and symbolic meanings in Serfoji's experiments in architecture.

Conclusion

Sadly, no trace is left of Serfoji's Royal Asiatic Society diploma, or of the 'colossal bronze bust' of Admiral Horatio Nelson that was sent along with I as a gift to the king, but the story of the bust is a wonderful specimen of the histories of artistic exchanges between Europeans and Indians in the 19th century.[46] The sculpture was made by Anne Seymour Damer, Lady Johnston's cousin and a renowned London sculptor, and sent to Serfoji as a part of her aspiration for improving 'native' sensibilities through art, by replacing 'the gods of the East with the heroes of Europe'. Damer had learned from Johnston of Serfoji's commitment to 'introducing Western civilization in his dominions' and the gift was intended 'to aid him in this excellent design'.[47] *The Oriental Herald* hailed the bust as an 'Elegant and appropriate tribute of respect, presented by the honourable Anne Seymour Damer to the Liberal and Enlightened King of Tanjore'.[48] Damer died without knowing that Serfoji had already commissioned sculptures by Flaxman, or that he had already erected memorial monuments to his own European heroes, even as he continued to worship the gods of the East. We, however, may examine the remarkable history of Serfoji's engagement with European architecture and appreciate the complexity and richness of his 19th-century experiments.

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Tanjore District Records.(TDR) Tamil Nadu State Archives

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[1] These innovations are the focus of my forthcoming biography of Serfoji II, "Scholar-king of Tanjore: Serfoji II and the shaping of Indian modernity". The present essay is a condensed text, written for presentation as the International Women's Association Lecture on January 11, 201, at the Government Museum of Madras, Chennai. It draws in summary on material discussed in greater detail and with fuller annotation in my forthcoming boo"Scholar-king of Tanjore", and in an essay in progress for publication.

[2] Llewellyn-Jones 1985.

[3] Muthiah 1984, Pillai 2006.

[4] Metcalf 1989.

[5] Pillai 2006, Metcalf 1989.

[6] For a study of the architecture of the Muktambal Chattram, see Linderman, 2009.

[7] Pearson 1835, pp. 271-351, and Peterson, *Scholar-king*, chapter 2.

[8] Peterson 2012.

[9] Letter to 'the Honorable SPCK from Serfogee Rajah, Tanjore May 28, 1801. *Abstracts of the Annual Reports of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.* London: Law and Gilbert, p.497.

[10]TDR 3472, 6 March 1802, pp.155-8, See also 13 May 1803. TDR 3477 p.79.

[11] Serfoji made donations to subscription funds for monuments to Bishop Heber, Thomas Munro (Governor of Madas) and other British public figures in India. See, for e.g., *TDR* 4357 , pp. 156-7, August 5, 1827.
[12] See Steggles 1990, Groseclose 1995, and Coutu 2006.

[13] Peterson, 2012.
[14] See Steggles, 1990, Groseclose, 1995, and Coutu 2006, for detailed studies of the idiom of chuch monuments in colonial Madras.
[15] See Groseclose, *British Sculpture*, pp. 64-66.and Coutu, *Persuasion*, pp. 299-302.
[16] Peterson 2012.
[17] Pearson, 1818, p.296.
[18] Mildred Archer. 1972. *Company Drawings in the India Office Library.* London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
[19]
[20] For a detailed study of the history of portraiture at the Tanjore Maratha court, with an emphasis on Serfoji, see Indira V. Peterson. 2008. 'Portraiture at the Tanjore Maratha Court: Toward Modernity in the Early 19th Century. ' Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, ed. *Portraits in Princely India: 1700-1947.* Bombay: Marg, pp. 44-57.
[21]On the symbolic and political economy of portrait exchanges among early modern Indian courts, see Molly Emma Aitken. 2000. *The Practiced Eye: Styles and Allusions in Mewar painting.* Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University.
[22] Peterson 2008.
[23] Several portraits were made of the Christian poet Vedanayaka Sastri, for example.
[24] Mss. Eur. Flaxman (John) British Library. Add. 39784A-CC Flaxman Business books.

See also Add. 39781. F. 330 and 303.

[25] Branfoot, 2000.
[26] '*Written after seeing the Statue of the Rajah of Tanjore by Flaxman.* In the florid letter that accompanied the poem, Pratt even quoted wisdom verses from the Hindu 'Shastras'. *TDR*3486, April 6, 1806 pp. 130-33.

[27] Robinson, 1830, p.161.

[28] Archer. 1968, pp. 59-64.
[29] E.g., T.Daniell, 'The Great Pagoda of Tanjore' the 1792 view by Thomas Daniell; (Daniell 1798); see also T. Daniell, The Great Bull, an Hindoo Idol, at the Pagoda in Tanjore, 1798),
[30] E. Trapaud, 'Rajarajeshvaram' 1801; H.Salt, Pagoda at Tanjore, 1809. British Library, OIOC Image collections.

[31] Catalogue number: SB80/7 numbers 4, 5, 7, 1,2, and 3, Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects, http://library.riba.org/uhtbin/cgisirsi.exe/rX9CQTLyVX/O/0/49.. For brief descriptions and reproductions, see Archer 1968, pp. 59-64.

[32] Valentia, *Voyages.*
[33]*TDR 3*417, p. 18.
[34] TDR 3417, p.17 3rd February, 1804, Serfoji to Resident William Blackburne.
[35] The honorary members were named at the Society's third meeting, on April 26, 1823 (Proceedings of the Council of the Asiatic Society. Library of the Royal Asiatic Society, manuscript) and published in the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society.* Volume 1. London, 1827.
[36]*Asiatic Journal and Monthly register of British India and its dependencies.* Vol. 28, 1829, London, 1829. 'Proceedings of the Royal Asiatic Society'. Saturday, March 14th, 1829. Anniversary meeting of the RAS, Council report 1829, p. 460. p.463. For details of the drawings, see the website of the library of the Royal Institute of British Architects, http://library.riba.org/uhtbin/cgisirsi.exe/rX9CQTLyVX/O/0/49. Catalogue number: SB 80/7 numbers 1-12. Also seeArcher, *Indian Architecture.*

[37] Report of the meeting of British Institute of Architects. 1836. Shivaji was elected member of the Institute, which was founded in 1834.
[38] Suresh 1993, pp. 15-16.
[39] For studies of Manora, see Ibid., Rajaram and Raju Poundurai 2002, and Suresh 2004.
[40]For good measure, Serfoji erected columns with identical inscriptions, in other coastal sites near the Pattukkottai Fort. See Resident's report, August 14, 1815. *TDR (Tanjore District Records,* Tamilnadu State archives*)* 3434 p.8-13, and *TDR,* 5/7/1815.

[41]http://www.gothereguide.com/calton+hill+edinburgh-place/

[42]Suresh notes that the tower functioned as a lighthouse, and he also points out its resemblance to the dovecots at the Maratha palace at Tiruvaiyaru. Suresh,1993, p. 15 and p.8. Such pigeon-cotes were common at many Indian courts, including Gingee and Tipu's Darya Daulat palace at Seringapatam. Serfoji did not build the dovecotes at Tiruvaiyaru, but he renovated them.
[43] Thus cementing Maratha relations with the Muslim populations on the Coromandel coast. For a study of this shrine, see Vasudha Narayanan. 2004. 'Nagore: Dargah of Hazrat Shahul Hamid'. In Mumtaz Currim and George Michell, eds. *Dargahs. Abodes of the Saints.* Bombay: Marg, pp. 136-48, p.46.
[44] Suresh 2004, and Rajaram and Poundurai, 2002. Suresh mentions the foundry at the fort, which suggests Serfoji's intention to use the space as a coastal defense site
[45] Head, *Catalogue* no. 101.001, p. 174.

[46] TDR 4435, pp.83-88 notes that a diploma, a bust and a book were sent to the raja.

[47]*Asiatic Journal and Monthly register of British India and its dependencies.* Vol. 28, 1829, London, 1829. 'Proceedings of the Royal Asiatic Society'. Saturday, March 14th, 1829, anniversary meeting of the RAS, Council report 1829, p. 463.

[48]*The Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature*. 126. Volume 10. July to September 1826. London: Cheese, Gordon, pp.111-118.